

Prayer of Thanksgiving for God's Scandalously Unfair Grace

Jonah 1:17-2:10 (CSV)

The Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish:

A) I called to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me. / I cried out for help from deep inside Sheol; / you heard my voice.

B) You threw me into the depths, into the heart of the seas, / and the current overcame me. / All your breakers and your billows swept over me.

C) But I said, / "I have been banished from your sight, / yet I will look once more toward your holy temple.

B¹) The water engulfed me up to the neck; / the watery depths overcame me; / seaweed was wrapped around my head.

A¹) I sank to the foundations of the mountains, / the earth's gates shut behind me forever!

A²) Then you raised my life from the Pit, Lord my God!

B²) As my life was fading away, / I remembered the Lord,

C¹) and my prayer came to you, / to your holy temple.

B³) Those who cherish worthless idols abandon their faithful love, / but as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving. / I will fulfill what I have vowed.

A³) Salvation belongs to the Lord."

Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

A) The Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish:

B^a) I called to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me. / I cried out for help from deep inside Sheol; / you heard my voice.

B^b) You threw me into the depths, into the heart of the seas, / and the current overcame me. / All your breakers and your billows swept over me.

But I said, / "I have been banished from your sight, / yet I will look once more toward your holy temple.

The water engulfed me up to the neck; / the watery depths overcame me; / seaweed was wrapped around my head.

I sank to the foundations of the mountains, / the earth's gates shut behind me forever!

B^{a1}) Then you raised my life from the Pit, Lord my God!

As my life was fading away, / I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, / to your holy temple.

B^c) Those who cherish worthless idols abandon their faithful love, / but as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving. / I will fulfill what I have vowed.

Salvation belongs to the Lord."

A¹) Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Prayer of Thanksgiving from the Psalms

Introductory Summary

- I called to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me.
- I cried out for help from deep inside Sheol; you heard my voice.

Recollection of the Crisis

- You threw me into the depths, into the heart of the seas,
- and the current overcame me.
- All your breakers and your billows swept over me.
- But I said,
- "I have been banished from your sight,
- yet I will look once more
- toward your holy temple.
- The water engulfed me up to the neck;
- the watery depths overcame me;
- seaweed was wrapped around my head.
- I sank to the foundations of the mountains,

- the earth's gates shut behind me forever!

Description of Deliverance

- Then you raised my life from the Pit, Lord my God!

Cry for Help

- As my life was fading away,
- I remembered the Lord,
- and my prayer came to you,
- to your holy temple.

Vows

- Those who cherish worthless idols abandon their faithful love,
- but as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving.
- I will fulfill what I have vowed.

Praise

- Salvation belongs to the Lord.”

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Three Days and Three Nights

Abraham and the Sacrifice of Isaac

So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. (Genesis 22:4 CSB)

Moses and Water in the Wilderness

Then Moses led Israel on from the Red Sea, and they went out to the Wilderness of Shur. **They journeyed for three days in the wilderness without finding water**.....The Lord made a statute and ordinance for them at Marah, and he tested them there. He said, “If you will carefully obey the Lord your God, do what is right in his sight, pay attention to his commands, and keep all his statutes, I will not inflict any illnesses on you that I inflicted on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.” Exodus 15:22 CSB)

Hosea and Returning to the Lord

Come, let us return to the Lord. For he has torn us, and he will heal us; he has wounded us, and he will bind up our wounds. **He will revive us after two days, and on the third day he will raise us up** so we can live in his presence. Let us strive to know the Lord. His appearance is as sure as the dawn. He will come to us like the rain, like the spring showers that water the land. (Hosea 6:1-2 CSB)

Jesus and the Temple

The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and **will you raise it up in three days?**” (John 2:2-3 ESV)

Jesus and the Cross and Resurrection

Then he began to teach them that it was necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and **rise after three days**. (Mark 8:31-33 CSB)

Then they left that place and made their way through Galilee, but he did not want anyone to know it. For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after he is killed, **he will rise three days later**.” (Mark 10:30-32 CSB)

They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were astonished, but those who followed him were afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, he began to tell them the things that would happen to him. “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death. Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles, and they will mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him, and **he will rise after three days**.” (Mark 12:32-34 CSB)

Paul and his Blindness

Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for **three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank**. (Acts 9:8-9 ESV)

Paul and the Shipwreck

On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. For many days neither sun nor stars appeared, and the severe storm kept raging. Finally all hope was fading that we would be saved. Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul then stood up among them and said, “You men should have followed my advice not to sail from Crete and sustain this damage and loss. **Now I urge you to take courage, because there will be no loss of any of your lives, but only of the ship**. For last night an angel of the God I belong to and serve stood by me and said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul. It is necessary for you to appear before Caesar. And indeed, God has graciously given you all those who are sailing with you.’ So take courage, men, because I believe God that it will be just the way it was told to me. But we have to run aground on some island.” (Acts 27:19-25 CSB)

A) I called to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me/ I cried out for help from deep inside Sheol; you heard my voice.

Sheol: Place of the Dead

I await **Sheol** as my home,/ spread out my bed in darkness, /and say to corruption, “You are my father,” / and to the maggot, “My mother” or “My sister,” / where then is my hope? / Who can see any hope for me? / Will it go down to the **gates of Sheol**, /or will we descend together to the dust? (Job 17:13-16 CSB)

Have you traveled to the sources of the sea or walked in the depths of the oceans? / Have the **gates of death** been revealed to you? / Have you seen the **gates of deep darkness**? / Have you comprehended the extent of the earth? / Tell me, if you know all this. (Job 38:16-18 CSB)

B) You threw me into the depths, into the heart of the seas, / and the current overcame me. / All your breakers and your billows swept over me.

C) But I said, / “I have been banished from your sight, / yet I will look once more toward your holy temple.

B¹) The water engulfed me up to the neck; / the watery depths overcame me; / seaweed was wrapped around my head.

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The Land of Sheol: The Judgment of God

DESTRUCTION OF TYRE: For this is what the Lord God says: “When I make you a ruined city like other deserted cities, when I **raise up the deep against you so that the mighty waters cover you**, then **I will bring you down to be with those who descend to the Pit**, to the people of antiquity. **I will make you dwell in the underworld like the ancient ruins**, with those **who descend to the Pit**, so that you will no longer be inhabited or display your splendor in the land of the living. I will make you an object of horror, and you will no longer exist. You will be sought but will never be found again.” This is the declaration of the Lord God. (Ezekiel 26:19-21 CSB)

DESTRUCTION OF THE NATIONS: In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, wail over the hordes of Egypt and bring Egypt and the daughters of mighty nations down to the underworld, to be with those who **descend to the Pit**:

Who do you surpass in loveliness? Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised! They will fall among those slain by the sword. A sword is appointed! They drag her and all her hordes away. Warrior leaders will speak from the **middle of Sheol** about him and his allies: ‘They have come down; the uncircumcised lie slain by the sword.’

“Assyria is there with her whole assembly; her graves are all around her. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword. Her graves are set in the **deepest regions of the Pit**, and her assembly is all around her burial place. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword—those who once spread terror in the land of the living.

“Elam is there with all her hordes around her grave. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword—those who **went down to the underworld** uncircumcised, who once spread their terror in the land of the living. They bear their disgrace with those who **descend to the Pit**. Among the slain they prepare a bed for Elam with all her hordes. Her graves are all around her. All of them are uncircumcised, slain by the sword, although their terror was once spread in the land of the living. They bear their disgrace with those who **descend to the Pit**. They are placed among the slain.

“Meshech and Tubal are there, with all their hordes. Their graves are all around them. All of them are uncircumcised, slain by the sword, although their terror was once spread in the land of the living. They do not lie down with the fallen warriors of the uncircumcised, who **went down to Sheol** with their weapons of war, whose swords were placed under their heads and their shields rested on their bones, although the terror of these warriors was once in the land of the living. But you will be shattered and will

lie down among the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword.

“Edom is there, her kings and all her princes, who, despite their strength, have been placed among those slain by the sword. They lie down with the uncircumcised, with those who **descend to the Pit**.”

All the leaders of the north and all the Sidonians are there. They went down in shame with the slain, despite the terror their strength inspired. They lie down uncircumcised with those slain by the sword. They bear their disgrace with those who **descend to the Pit**.

“Pharaoh will see them and be comforted over all his hordes— Pharaoh and his whole army, slain by the sword.” This is the declaration of the Lord God. “For I will spread my terror in the land of the living, so Pharaoh and all his hordes will be laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword.” This is the declaration of the Lord God. (Ezekiel 32:17-32 CSB)

A²) Then you raised my life from the Pit, Lord my God!

Joseph in the Pit

They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and **throw him into one of the pits**. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; **throw him into this pit** here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. And they took him and **threw him into a pit**. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him.

Then Midianite traders passed by. And **they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit**, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt. (Genesis 37:18-28 ESV)

Demons in the Pit

Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the **abyss**. Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, **and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned**. (Luke 8:30-33 ESV)

Satan in the Pit

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand **the key to the bottomless pit** and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and **threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him**, so that she might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. (Revelation 20:1-3 ESV)

B²) As my life was fading away, / I remembered the Lord,

C¹) and my prayer came to you, / to your holy temple.

B³) Those who cherish worthless idols abandon their faithful love, / but as for me, I will sacrifice to you with a voice of thanksgiving. / I will fulfill what I have vowed.

A³) Salvation belongs to the Lord.”

Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

A) OPENING PRAISE 1-3

1. I love you, Lord, my strength.
2. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, / my God, my rock where I seek refuge, / my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
3. **I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, / and I was saved from my enemies.**

B) YAHWEH'S SPECTACULAR RESCUE OF THE PSALMIST 4-19

1. **The ropes of death were wrapped around me; /the torrents of destruction terrified me.**
2. **The ropes of Sheol entangled me; / the snares of death confronted me.**
3. **I called to the Lord in my distress, / and I cried to my God for help.**
4. **From his temple he heard my voice, / and my cry to him reached his ears.**
5. **Then the earth shook and quaked; / the foundations of the mountains trembled; /they shook because he burned with anger.**
6. Smoke rose from his nostrils, / and consuming fire came from his mouth; /coals were set ablaze by it.
7. He bent the heavens and came down, / total darkness beneath his feet.
8. **He rode on a cherub and flew, / soaring on the wings of the wind.**
9. **He made darkness his hiding place, / dark storm clouds his canopy around him.**
10. **From the radiance of his presence, / his clouds swept onward with hail and blazing coals.**
11. **The Lord thundered from heaven; / the Most High made his voice heard / with hail and blazing coals**
12. **He shot his arrows and scattered them; /he hurled lightning bolts and routed them.**
13. **The depths of the sea became visible, / the foundations of the world were exposed,**
14. **at your rebuke, Lord, /at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.**
15. **He reached down from on high and took hold of me; / he pulled me out of deep water.**
16. **He rescued me from my powerful enemy / and from those who hated me, / for they were too strong for me.**
17. **They confronted me in the day of my calamity, /but the Lord was my support.**
18. **He brought me out to a spacious place; / he rescued me because he delighted in me.**

C) YAHWEH'S HELP CAME BECAUSE THE PSALMIST WAS BLAMELESS 20-24

1. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; he repaid me / according to the cleanness of my hands.
2. For I have kept the ways of the Lord / and have not turned from my God to wickedness.
3. Indeed, I let all his ordinances guide me / and have not disregarded his statutes.
4. I was blameless toward him / and kept myself from my iniquity.
5. **So the Lord repaid me according to my righteousness, / according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.**

D) YAHWEH EXALTS THE HUMBLE BUT BRINGS LOW THE PROUD 25-29

1. With the faithful you prove yourself faithful, / with the blameless you prove yourself blameless,
2. with the pure you prove yourself pure; / but with the crooked you prove yourself shrewd.
3. **For you rescue an oppressed people, / but you humble those with haughty eyes.**
4. Lord, you light my lamp; / my God illuminates my darkness.
5. With you I can attack a barricade, / and with my God I can leap over a wall.

C1) YAHWEH IS BLAMELESS, HELPING THOSE WHO APPEAL TO HIM 30-31

1. **God—his way is perfect; / the word of the Lord is pure. / He is a shield to all who take refuge in him.**
2. For who is God besides the Lord? / And who is a rock? Only our God.

B1) PSALMIST'S SPECTACULAR DEFEAT OF HIS ENEMIES WITH YAHWEH'S HELP 32-45

1. God—he clothes me with strength / and makes my way perfect.
2. **He makes my feet like the feet of a deer / and sets me securely on the heights.**
3. He trains my hands for war; / my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
4. You have given me the shield of your salvation; / your right hand upholds me, / and your humility exalts me.

5. You make a spacious place beneath me for my steps, / and my ankles do not give way.
6. I pursue my enemies and overtake them; / I do not turn back until they are wiped out.
7. I crush them, and they cannot get up; / they fall beneath my feet.
8. You have clothed me with strength for battle; / you subdue my adversaries beneath me.
9. You have made my enemies retreat before me; / I annihilate those who hate me.
10. They cry for help, but there is no one to save them—/ they cry to the Lord, but he does not answer them.
11. I pulverize them like dust before the wind; / I trample them like mud in the streets.
12. You have freed me from the feuds among the people; / you have appointed me the head of nations; / a people I had not known serve me.
13. **Foreigners submit to me cringing; / as soon as they hear they obey me.**
14. **Foreigners lose heart / and come trembling from their fortifications.**

A1) Closing Praise 46-50

1. The Lord lives—blessed be my rock! / The God of my salvation is exalted.
2. God—he grants me vengeance / and subdues peoples under me.
3. He frees me from my enemies./ You exalt me above my adversaries; / you rescue me from violent men.
4. **Therefore I will give thanks to you among the nations, Lord; / I will sing praises about your name.**
5. **He gives great victories to his king; / he shows loyalty to his anointed, /to David and his descendants forever.**

New Testament Jonah’s Prayer

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously lived according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— not from works, so that no one can boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. (Ephesians 2:1-10 CSB)

For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God’s love, and to know Christ’s love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us— to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21 CSB)